

AUDRAIN HAD EARLY HISTORY OF INTEREST

The first term of the circuit court began March 13, 1837, and for the sake of the regularity of the record, to have it comply with the act of 1836, that record shows the opening of the court "at the house of Edward Jennings, in the town of New Mexico." But the fact is, the court was held at the same place as the county court, in the house of James E. Fenton, located on one of the lots of the town of Mexico.

The first murder case in the county was that of State of Missouri against Milroy Powell, for killing George Eubanks with a hoe. The altercation in which Eubanks was killed took place on the first day of July, 1840, on a farm just north of Mexico. Eubanks died on the sixth day of July, thereafter. Powell was indicted for murder in the first degree and was tried by the following jury—William M. Jones, John W. Truett, Joseph Smith, Thomas Larkin, William Hayse, James McCormack, Joseph Surber, Robert Todd, Thomas R. Musick, William Sox, Parish Garner and William Doolin. The court gave instructions for murder in both the first and second degrees and for manslaughter in the third and fourth degrees. The defense was self-defense and that Eubanks died as the result of the mismanagement of his physicians and nurses. The jury returned a verdict of manslaughter in the fourth degree and fined him the sum of \$325. He was sent to Monroe county for imprisonment but was released before the expiration of his sentence.

The only legal execution ever taking place in the county are those above referred to. There never was a lynching within the county and the foregoing murder cases are not all, but are the notable ones within the county. Taking the county as a whole, from its early history down to the present time, it may be said to be of more than above the average as to the law abiding character of its inhabitants.

THE BAR

The business of the courts was carried on by the non-resident attorneys, following the circuit, as was the fashion then until 1851, when Samuel A. Craddock from Kentucky, established an office in Mexico. He was followed by Samuel M. Edwards from Virginia, M. Y. Duncan, formerly from Callaway county and Charles C. Ricketts from Virginia.

The first doctors practicing in Aud-

rain county were Mathew Walton and G. W. Penny. When the county seat was located, they were at or near Mexico. Soon after Mexico was laid off, Dr. Edward Ratliff, a native of Maine, and a graduate of Bowdoin College of that state, located on a farm three or four miles northeast of Mexico and engaged in practice. He afterwards removed to Mexico and from there to Santa Fe, Missouri, where he continued to practice for many years. About the same time came Dr. W. H. Lee, afterward county judge.

In 1854, Dr. R. W. Bourn came to Mexico from Kentucky and at that time found Drs. Lazarus N. Hunter, Nathaniel Allison and W. H. Lee, located there.

The first deed placed of record was dated February, 1837, wherein William Wood conveyed to John B. Morris, the northeast quarter of the southwest quarter of section 36, township 51, range 9, of Audrain county. However this was not the first conveyance made in the county, for prior to that time deeds were sent to Monroe and some other counties for record of the county was organized.

According to the United States census for 1840, the population of the

county was, 1,949. This growth chiefly took place after the organization of the county in February, 1837.

The county court of Audrain county was authorized by the legislature by an act approved January 25, 1837, with the counties of Pike, Ralls, Monroe, and Shelby, "to subscribe and take so much stock in 'The Salt River Navigation Company,' as they may think proper for the use and benefit of the county."

The Salt River Navigation Company was one of the projects of John M. Clemens of Florida, Monroe county, the father of Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain.) By this act Clemens and his associates were given authority to open and deepen the bed of Salt river from the junction of the Three Forks of Salt river near Florida, to its mouth on the Mississippi river, to erect dams, levees, bridges, etc., so as to render the stream navigable for steamboats and other boats.

The last elk killed in the county was in 1837. The deer, however, remained in abundance until late in the '50s and the last wild turkey killed in the county was about 1875.

Again until the Graduation Act, so

called, of 1884, they had not the money to enter land from the Government at \$1.25 per acre, and it was not until that Act reduced the price to 12½ cents an acre that prairie lands began to be taken up. By 1850 the population had increased to 3,506 over 400 of whom were slaves.

Teaming in the late '40s and thru the '50s, until the North Missouri Railroad reached Mexico in 1858, was a very flourishing business. All supplies coming into the county until that time came over the prairies in wagons from Louisiana and Hannibal to Mexico. When the Mississippi was frozen over so boats could not get to these towns, goods were hauled from St. Louis. Two noted teamsters of

that time were John and Samuel Ding's.

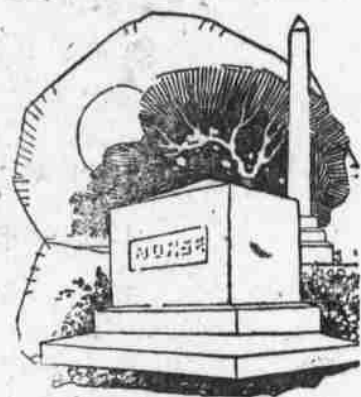
The North Missouri Railroad was completed to Mexico in 1858 and extended northward to Hudson City, now Macon, by 1860. The county court in 1853 subscribed \$50,000 to the capital stock of that railroad on condition that it would be located on what was called "The Ridge Route," and thus touch Mexico, the county seat. At the time this subscription was made people thought this to be an enormous indebtedness, but by the time the road was completed to Mexico in June, 1858, the entire amount had been paid without oppression or even inconvenience.

The Louisiana & Missouri River Railroad was completed to Mexico in

1872. The county had issued bonds to the amount of \$300,000 to aid the construction of this road. That bond issue was made by the court elected in 1866, composed of Increase Adams, John B. Morris, and B. H. Wilder. There was never any serious question of the legality of the subscription. The last bond was paid in 1881. This

road now forms part of the Chicago & Alton Railroad. That road was extended from Mexico to Kansas City in 1878. The Burlington System entered in the county in 1906.

Alexander had Gold Coffin. Alexander the Great is said to have been buried in a golden coffin.



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